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SECRET

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CONTENTS

VIETNAM: Situation report. (Page 1)



25X6

USSR: Georgian party boss and Politburo candidate Mzhavanadze has requested retirement. (Page 3)

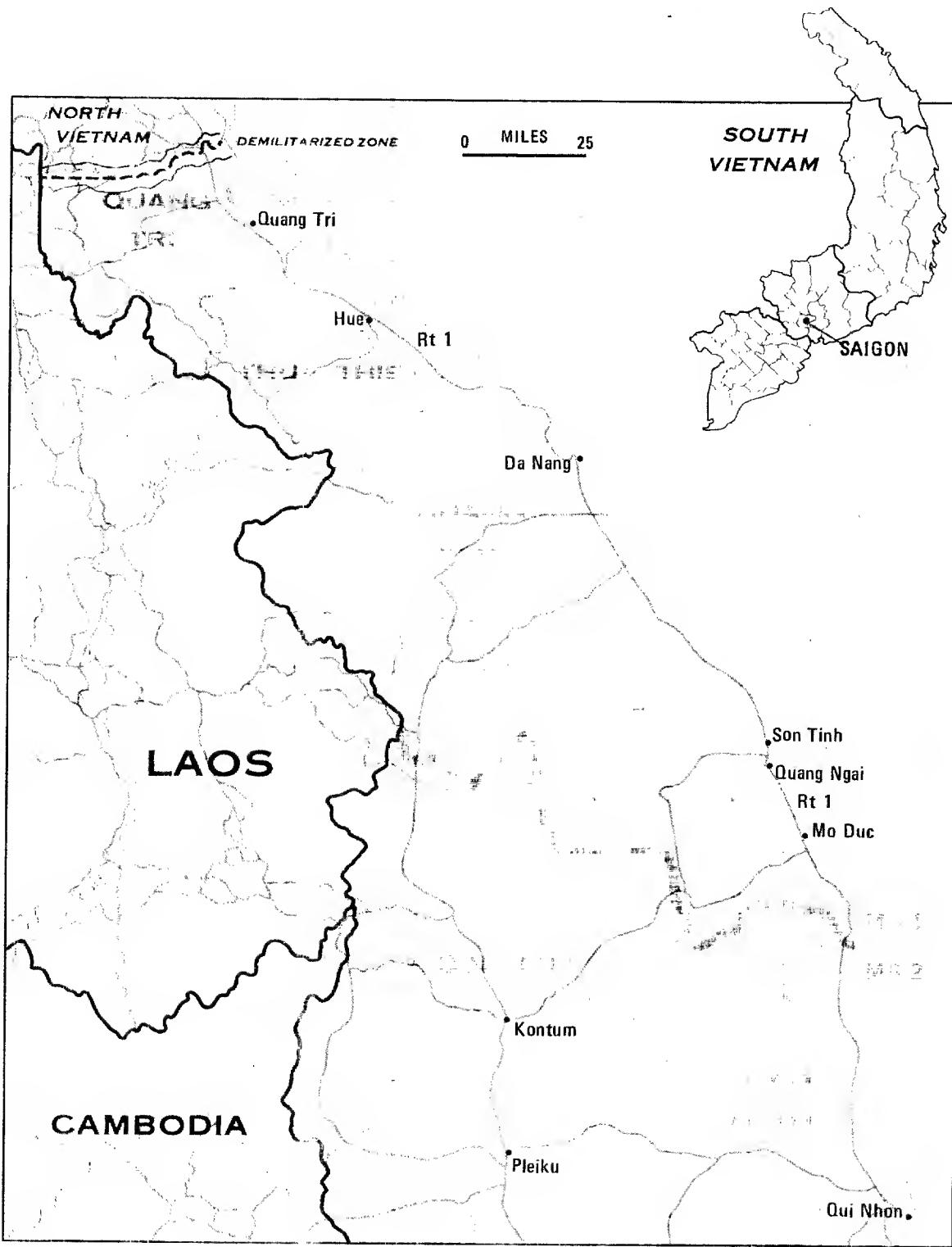
GUATEMALA: The disappearance of top Communist leaders may spark terrorist reprisals. (Page 4)

BOLIVIA: President Banzer has moved to neutralize disruptive elements in the government. (Page 5)

DENMARK: Prospects for EC referendum (Page 6)

THAILAND: Ubon air base shelled (Page 6)

SECRET



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~~VIETNAM:~~ The most significant military action over the weekend took place in the northern coastal province of Quang Ngai.

25X1

South Vietnamese Ranger and armor units broke through the enemy roadblock on Route 1 north of Mo Duc, but have not yet completely cleared the road. As the result of several days of sharp fighting, both sides are reported to have suffered heavy casualties. North of the provincial capital, government troops recaptured two of the three enemy-held outposts near Son Tinh. In the southernmost districts of the province, Rangers have reported no major enemy resistance as they continue clearing operations.

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25X6

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USSR: The resignation of 70-year-old Georgian party boss V. P. Mzhavanadze on 29 September is expected to lead to the first departure of a Politburo-level leader in more than six years.

Mzhavanadze requested retirement because of age after having headed the Georgian party organization for almost 20 years. He will probably lose his candidate membership on the Politburo at the next CPSU Central Committee plenum. Succeeding him as Georgian first secretary is E. A. Shevardnadze, 44, who only two months ago was named chief of the republic's capital party organization, which had been attacked for corruption and nationalism earlier in the year.

Shevardnadze's meteoric rise in the republic leadership probably results from his good connections in Moscow; until recently, he had headed the republic's Ministry of Interior, whose national chief is a longtime associate of General Secretary Brezhnev. [redacted]

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GUATEMALA: The disappearance of the top leaders of the Guatemalan Communist Party, including the Secretary-General, on 26 September may lead to terrorist strikes against government officials and diplomats.

Although the Arana government publicly denies any responsibility, the press has widely reported that security forces broke into a secret meeting and arrested the Communists. The press has also repeated persistent "rumors" that the men have been killed. A statement by the interior minister that many such disappearances are the work of unscrupulous persons who promise to take people to the US without visas and then dump them in the Gulf of Mexico will hardly divert suspicion from the government.

As time passes without word of the whereabouts of the Communist leaders, it will be assumed that they are dead. The government will get both the blame and the credit for having dealt the extreme left one of its most serious setbacks. Both the Communist Party and the pro-Cuban Rebel Armed Forces, the country's major terrorist organization, may be forced to retaliate in order to maintain their credibility as significant national forces.

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BOLIVIA: President Banzer has finally moved forcefully to neutralize disruptive elements in the military-civilian coalition government. *4*

Rightist Army Colonel Juan Ayoroa and National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) Deputy Chief Guillermo Bedregal were deported on Saturday.

Ayoroa's anti-MNR statements and suspected coup plotting recently cost him his troop command, but he evidently persisted in attempting to enlist other senior officers in his scheme. The leftist Bedregal, who is anathema both to the military and to many of his fellow party members, had just returned to test the political winds in Bolivia after a previous involuntary absence. His appearance exacerbated party infighting over who would exercise MNR leadership during party chief Victor Paz's prospective trip to the US.

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With Ayoroa and Bedregal gone tensions should ease considerably. The most important repercussion of the latest mini-crisis, however, may be its effect on the politically astute middle grade officers who command key units in and around La Paz. This group is basically loyal to Banzer but is unhappy with what it sees as his indecisive handling of such potentially explosive situations. *4*

25X1

NOTES

DENMARK: Three separate weekend polls gave pro-EC forces a substantial margin in today's referendum on market membership. Two of the polls showed approximately 55 percent favoring EC entry, 38 percent against and seven percent undecided. The third poll reflects an even greater margin in favor of membership--an indication that last week's "no" vote in Norway may have had a positive effect on Danish voters. The EC issue has enjoyed stronger support in Denmark than in Norway from the outset. A large majority in parliament favors membership and many Danes realize that rejection would have a strong negative effect on the economy. The rules governing the referendum tend to favor pro-EC elements; the opposition vote must not only exceed the "yes" vote, but must also include a minimum of 30 percent of all eligible voters as well. Pro-EC forces still could suffer from a small turnout, however, and if less than 75 percent of the electorate ballots the result could be close. [redacted]

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C THAILAND: A small-scale attack against Ubon air base yesterday involving about 15 artillery or mortar rounds, destroyed some communications equipment but apparently caused no other damage. According to preliminary reports, there were no US casualties. Minor attacks on US bases in northeastern Thailand have occurred occasionally in the past, including two on Ubon. They appear to be staged by North Vietnamese teams that are infiltrated especially for such missions and are then withdrawn. [redacted]

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